

This **Comment** on the West Coast Governors' Agreement web site is from:

**Date:** June 6, 2007

**Name:** Fran Recht

**State(s):** Oregon

Regarding Topic Areas:

Scientific information, research, and monitoring

Comment/Suggestion:

I was distressed when I found out that not even one individual specifically representing conservation interests or a conservation group was invited to participate in the day long meeting held in Depoe Bay, Oregon by Oregon Sea Grant and others (to discuss the Regional Research Plan for the west coast).

I commented about this to the leaders of this effort and was told three things that the conservation interests were represented by the researchers on the committee, that the public was welcome to comment during the public open session (which is where I talked to the Sea Grant organizers about this), and that they couldn't invite everyone, but decisions weren't being made and there would be lots of opportunity to comment.

Not happy with any of these answers I talked to two people who were helping to facilitate the meeting and would be involved in the debriefing the next day and planning for the others. They assured me that this would be brought up. So while I am certain that this situation would probably be remedied for future meetings, I am most concerned about the mind set that would have left out conservation interests in the first place as an extraneous, redundant, or unimportant input.

This comes on the heels of finding out that a research/test site for wave energy was to be established in Newport, Oregon and that the only persons involved in the discussion (facilitated by Sea Grant) that agreed to a specific location for the test site were local fishermen and a local marine boat tour business. When a person who runs a surfing business, a surfing group representative and I questioned this facilitator (at a public meeting) about the choice of group participants, we were told that if conservation groups, surfers, homeowners etc. wanted to put together their own group to provide input they were free to do so and that fishermen had organized this group at the urging of a county commissioner.

While this is certainly true, the idea of a Sea Grant staffer working only with fishermen on an ocean zoning issue is disturbing. If those other groups had gotten together to discuss this and left off fishermen there would have been cries of foul. There would also not likely have been a Sea Grant staffer assigned to support the group. Where Sea Grant or Oregon State University or other public entities are involved in facilitation of meetings regarding ocean issues, inclusivity should be encouraged. Where there is a need for people to be able to speak openly with their peers, then at least parallel meetings should be held with others where the use of the ocean commons is being considered.